



Glossary of Terms

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Biodiversity	refers to the diversity of species within an ecosystem, and in a study of urban environemnts refers to the diversity of flora within the urban environment
Bioswale	a bioswale is a shallow depression created in the earth to accept and convey stormwater runoff. A bioswale uses natural means, including vegetation and soil, to treat stormwater by filtering out contaminants being conveyed in the water.
Canopy tree	a tree that has a wide, spreading crown that arches overhead and can provide shade to the ground below
Circulation	refers to the pattern of movement of pedestrians or vehicles
Conflict points	in traffic assessments, refers to specific locations where potential conflict may occur between vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians. A common example is a right-turn lane at an intersection, in which bicycles proceeding straight through can be cut off by vehicles making turns, or pedestrians may attempt to cross the street where vehicles are turning.
Curb ramps	refers to ramps at crosswalks and intersections that are requisite for ease of accessibility both for wheelchairs and for those on foot. Curb ramps ease the transition from the grade of the road to the higher grade of the sidewalk and are generally required by law.
Deciduous	characteristic of trees and plants that involves shedding leaves annually, often involving changes in leaf color and falling leave in autumn
Downtown Chapel Hill	the Downtown District of Chapel Hill is the area defined by Rosemary and Franklin Streets to the north and south and Roberson and Henderson Streets to the west and east
Full cut-off fixture	a light fixture that directs light downward while preventing excess light from being cast upward or outward; helps to reduce potential light pollution.
Grade change	refers to a shift in the topography such that there is a measurable change in elevation from one point to the next; also referred to as slope
Grading modifications	refers to adjustments to the ground plane or surface, often involving moving of soil and subsequent repaving or planting
Green infrastructure	refers to areas covered with trees, shrubs and grass that are porous, allowing water to soak into soil while naturally filtering pollutants before reentering waterways
Green spaces	includes public open spaces, from larger recreational parks to courtyards of private buildings that are open to the public
Handrail	a railing use at the side of a stairway or elevated surface to offer support
IESNA standards	lighting recommendations published by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA), the national technical authority on illumination

GLOSSARY OF TERMS, continued

Infrastructure	fundamental facilities and systems serving a city or geographic area, including utilities, communication and transportation networks
Light pollution	occurs when outdoor lighting is misdirected, misplaced, unshielded, excessive or unnecessary. As a result, light spills unnecessarily upward and outward, causing glare, light trespass, and a nighttime urban “sky glow” overhead, indicating wasted energy, obscuring the stars overhead, and disrupting wildlife.
Planters	refers to walled planting areas or large outdoor containers for plants that are installed in the sidewalk and which can be used to support small trees and shrubs. These walled areas are less suitable for large trees, as they leave insufficient room for spreading roots.
Master Plan	a plan giving overall guidance, typically offering a long-term outline of a project or series of projects
Nano Park	small, publicly accessible open space that relates directly to the street and contains shade tree plantings, seating and paved areas
On-street parking	refers to metered parking spaces that occupy the rightmost lane on either side of a road.
Off-street parking	refers to parking spaces that occur in parking lots or parking decks
Property setback	the distance a building or structure is required to be set back from a property line or right-of-way
Rain garden	recessed planter that can capture and filter water as it runs off of sidewalks and roads, cleansing it before it is passed back into the water system
Raised crosswalk	a type of pedestrian crossing whereby the section of road representing the crossing is elevated to the grade of the sidewalk, rather than kept at the same grade as the road but designated with surface markings.
Raised intersection	a raised intersection applies the same strategy as a raised crosswalk to all crosswalks at an intersection, elevating the entire center part of the intersection.
Right of way (ROW)	an easement owned by the Town that permits use of a delineated area of land for roads and/or sidewalks; though the land may be privately owned the Town reserves full legal rights to place utilities, pave or otherwise modify roadways and sidewalks within this designated area
Street Tree	any tree planted, maintained, and/or assumed by the Town within the public easement or right-of-way
Streetscape	refers to urban roadway design and conditions as they impact street users and nearby residents; streetscapes are an important component of the public realm (public spaces where people often interact), which help define a community’s transport conditions, activities, aesthetic quality and identity

GLOSSARY OF TERMS, continued

Structural pruning	pruning to maintain a single dominant trunk by reducing and/or removing competing stems, resulting in a canopy of well-spaced branches; increases the structural integrity of a tree, making it less susceptible to mechanical breakage and decay
Structural soil	a planting medium designed to support the weight of walks, roads, pedestrians and vehicles as well as provide a well-aerated soil substrate for tree root growth
Topography	the three-dimensional quality of the ground defined by changes in elevation
Traffic calming measures	techniques or devices used to reduce the speed of traffic, often implemented to improve pedestrian safety at crossings. These can take a variety of forms, from speed bumps and raised intersections to traffic medians that reduce conflict points.
Tree grates	sturdy metal open-work structures that are inset into the sidewalk to provide space below grade for tree roots. Tree grates allow continuity of the walking surface around trees while protecting trees from soil compaction.



Appendix